GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:218
ANSWERED ON:12.03.2001
USE OF POLYTHENE BAGS
MOHAMMED SHAHABUDDIN;RAM SHAKAL

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the demand of plastic has increased during the last three years;

(b) if so, whether it is being recycled and made available at cheaper rate;

(c) if so, the facts thereof alongwith its ill effects on environment;

(d) whether excessive use of polythene bags is posing serious threat to environment;

(e) if so, the details and extent thereof;

(f) whether polythene bags of substandard quality manufactured by certain companies leave their colour on the food item packed inside them; and

(g) if so, the steps taken by the Government to remedy the situation and action proposed against the manufacturers?

Answer

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R.BAALU)

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERED TO PARTS (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) FOR REPLY OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION 218 FOR 12.03.2001 REGARDING `USE OF POLYTHENE BAGS` BY SHRI RAMSHAKAL AND SHRI (MOHD.) SHAHABUDDIN:

(a), (b), (c), (d) & (e) Yes Sir. Indiscriminate disposal and dumping of polythene bags could result in contamination of soil and water and also cause blockage of sewers and drains. Burning of polythene bags could cause air pollution.

(f) Certain colourants and pigments used as additives during manufacture of recycled plastic bags can leach out thereby contaminating food items stored and packaged therein. Consumption of such food items can be harmful to humans and animals.

(g) The Ministry has notified the `Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999` which prohibits the use of carry bags and containers made of recycled plastics for storing, carrying, dispensing or packaging of ready-to-eat foodstuffs. Inter-alia, the Rules require that carry bags and containers made of recycled plastics shall be coloured as per the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) approved list of pigments and colourants and that recycling shall be undertaken as per the BIS guidelines.

Any person violating the provisions of these Rules is liable to be punished in accordance with Section 15 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 which includes imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or fine which may extend to Rupees One lakh or both.